

MINUTES
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, March 09, 2017

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW53

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Brackett, Vice Chairman Nonini, Senators Keough, Winder, Hagedorn, Den Hartog, Lodge, Harris, and Buckner-Webb

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the Committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chairman Brackett** convened the meeting of the Senate Transportation Committee (Committee) at 1:35 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Den Hartog** moved to approve the Minutes of Tuesday, February 28, 2017. **Senator Harris** seconded the motion. The motion was approved by **voice vote**.

H 204 **Defines personal delivery device and operator; the devices may operate on sidewalks.** **Chairman Brackett** invited Teresa Molitor, a lobbyist representing Starship Technologies, and David Catania, spokesman for Starship Technologies, to present **H 204**.

Ms. Molitor said that there is a significant increase in people's behavior regarding what they want delivered and how often they want it delivered. E-commerce is growing by double digits every year and the delivery industry is having trouble keeping up with demand. As a response, Starship Technologies developed Personal Delivery Devices. Because they are new technology, Idaho Code does not have a framework for them. **H 204** sets up that framework and specifies conditions for these devices to operate in Idaho. She showed a newscast segment from Washington, D.C. where the devices are in use.

Mr. Catania said that Starship Technologies is two years old founded by the founders of Skype. They came up with the idea while participating in a NASA project to develop devices that could pick up rocks on the moon; they thought there would be a good application on Earth as well.

The company's headquarters are in Estonia, an eastern European Baltic nation. They have operations throughout Europe, and two operations in the United States – one in Redwood City, California and the other in Washington, D.C. If Idaho passes this legislation, it would be the second in the United States to do so.

The technology is geared to the last mile of delivery, where 50 to 70 percent of the cost of energy is exerted. This device can assist with that; two of several product types are: 1.) Star Technologies partners with one of their principal investors, Mercedes, with "Motherships" which are vans carrying eight of the devices that are dispatched for delivery from the van's location; and 2.) Star Technologies partners with retail stores where the devices are housed and can be ordered from the retailer. They are implementing an extremely exponentially exploding area of e-commerce.

Vice Chairman Nonini asked if the devices were programed to move the way it was moving in Committee or was there another way. **Ms. Molitor** clarified that she was moving the device.

Senator Lodge asked what are the safety measures; how easy is it to vandalize. **Mr. Catania** said the device is locked during transit and only the individual ordering the items inside could unlock the device from a unique identifier on their cell phone. It is sturdy and it cannot be stolen because of the nine cameras and eight sonic sensors. If there is a disruption, there is a two-way audio and the human operator will tell the individual to refrain from disturbing the device. There are multiple GPS and backup programs so the device can be found. There has never been an issue of violence or theft. **Senator Lodge** asked if it had audio built into it. **Mr. Catania** said yes, it has two-way audio. If there's a problem, the human operator can communicate with the individual at the device.

Senator Hagedorn asked about the Mothership that disburses eight of these devices for delivery. Will the van's driver stay in the area until all eight return? **Mr. Catania** said the way it's managed is the people who ordered the devices insert a delivery time convenient for them and the device will arrive at the time requested.

Vice Chairman Nonini asked about the protections to ensure minors don't purchase cigarettes or alcohol. **Mr. Catania** said that both cigarettes and liquor cannot be ordered in the United States. In Europe, only legal items can be sent.

Senator Harris asked if there is liability insurance in case one is hit. **Mr. Catania** answered yes, but so far it has not been an issue. For safety, there is a sensor bubble of 15 feet around the device. If an object is in front, the device will see the object before it is hit. If the device were to be hit, it simply shatters.

Senator Den Hartog wanted to know why Idaho? **Mr. Catania** had met with legislators around the United States and Idaho was the perfect location for testing the device.

Senator Lodge asked where it was manufactured. **Mr. Catania** said that its parts come from around the world, but it is built in Estonia where they have a big factory. They are looking for a place to manufacture them in the United States.

Senator Lodge inquired into the attributes of the workforce they need. **Mr. Catania** said they need electrical engineering skills, they require the capabilities to create 3-D maps of the areas they serve, and it being an unfolding field, they need generally skilled people.

Chairman Brackett asked what about multi-story buildings? **Mr. Catania** said it cannot do multiple steps, but some buildings are programming their elevators' software to work with the device.

Senator Hagedorn wanted to know if its low, short design was intentional or are there other models. **Mr. Catania** said the terrain of the jurisdiction will determine the design and weight of the device.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

Ms. Molitor concluded her presentation by going through the sections of the bill. She reminded the Committee that Idaho was on the short list for this device.

Chairman Brackett asked if the robot would be available for personal ownership. **Ms. Molitor** said that "no" was the short answer.

Senator Hagedorn was curious about the two-way communication and what was the rules for keeping personal information; is there a privacy issue. **Mr. Catania** responded that there is an audio and a video perspective, but when it is in autonomous mode there is a high resolution. Information is transmitted to Estonia, the business headquarters, but is not stored.

Vice Chairman Nonini asked if there were other dimensions they're looking at other than this 35 pound, four to six mile per hour model. **Mr. Catania** said this was an emerging industry. They have, literally, built-in some room to grow.

Chairman Brackett asked if there were refrigeration units. **Mr. Catania** said it is under consideration.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Nonini moved that **H 204** be sent to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Lodge** seconded the motion. The motion pass by **voice vote**. Chairman Brackett will carry the bill on the floor.

PRESENTATION:

LHTAC Road Scholar Training Program and Information. **Chairman Brackett** invited Laila Kral, Deputy Administration of the Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC), to begin her presentation.

Ms. Kral said that Technology Transfer (T2) centers conduct affordable classes covering the latest information on road maintenance procedures and technologies. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds the centers with a 50% match housed at and supported by LHTAC. T2 centers provide assistance in the areas of safety, professional development, and maintenance. They offer in-person training courses across the State as well as online. LHTAC also produces a quarterly newsletter, a monthly Tech News for technical assistance, offers a free road safety audit survey for local agencies, and informs locals about FHWA webinars.

Ms. Kral continued by explaining the Road Scholar/Road Master programs. The programs are a way for local road professionals to be recognized for successfully completing a series of training courses. The program curriculum is designed to provide participants with the fundamentals of safety, management, and advanced technologies, as well as exposure to a wide variety of other topics relevant to transportation. Through this program, local agencies are able to provide an opportunity to develop their greatest asset, their employees. Safety Fest is an annual training event that offers free safety and health training to workers, supervisors, and managers of all levels.

LHTAC's Council scores funding applications as well as makes recommendations to the Idaho Transportation Board (ITB) on State projects. They provide general supervision over the operation of LHTAC with regard to determining its programs, mission, policies, and goals. The Council has established an annual budget for the maintenance and operation of LHTAC, and maintained a positive and open working relationship with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD).

Ms. Kral said that LHTAC administers federal-aid by soliciting applications from eligible local agencies and ensuring that federal-aid standards and requirements are met. Council members independently score applications and submit them to LHTAC staff. Finally, through a stewardship agreement with ITD, LHTAC assists local highway jurisdictions in administering projects by negotiating the scope of the project, reviewing its plans, managing contracts, and disseminating general information. In short, LHTAC provides the best and most efficient assistance to every local highway jurisdiction in Idaho.

Chairman Brackett asked about funding. **Ms. Kral** said LHTAC receives \$150,000 in federal funding which must be matched; \$25,000 comes from ITD and \$125,000 from local jurisdictions.

Senator Hagedorn asked who pays the fees associated with the classes. **Ms. Kral** said that the majority of the classes have a fee of \$60 for early registration; heavy equipment and ACCESS classes have higher fees. She said LHTAC offers some scholarships, but mostly the fees are paid by the organization the trainees are associated with.

Chairman Brackett asked where LHTAC finds instructors for the classes they offer. **Ms. Kral** they come mainly from retired ITD employees and from T2 centers.

ADJOURNED: With no further business before the Committee, **Chairman Brackett** adjourned the meeting at 2:33 p.m.

Senator Brackett
Chair

Gaye Bennett
Secretary